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**REMARKS BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
SEVENTH WOMEN LAWYERS' CONGRESS
CONCLUDING SESSION
BALLROOM, WESTIN HOTEL
DHAKA
MARCH 16, 2013**

Hafiz Mozumdar, M.P.

Dr. Moin Khan, Former Minister

Dr. Shahdeen Malik, Advocate of the Bangladesh Supreme Court and Director of the School of Law, Brac University

Longtime friend and powerful voice for Bangladesh, Rokhsana Khondker, Executive Director, Khan Foundation

And most especially you ... all of you ... women lawyers from all 64 districts of wonderful Bangladesh

Asalaam m'laikum and good afternoon ...

It was a long time ago ...

... it was nearly 237 years ago ...

... when the people of America cried out "Enough! ... we want our freedom; we want development; we want democracy."

We declared our independence and began building our nation.

It was a long time ago ...

... it was nearly 42 years ago ...

... when the people of Bangladesh cried out "Enough! ... we want our freedom; we want development; we want democracy."

And Bangladesh, too, declared its independence and began building your nation.

America and Bangladesh ... to this very day ... continue to build, to strengthen, to broaden development and democracy.

We ... America and Bangladesh ... struggle every day to advance development and perfect democracy ... it a struggle that will have no end, as we struggle on day after day, week after week, year after year, decade after decade, century after century ... we struggle on ... we struggle on to better our respective nations.

In one fashion or another, I have been in the business of development and democracy since 1970, and over these many years I have learned a few things.

Most importantly, I have learned that if you really want to promote sustainable development, if you really want to fortify meaningful democracy, then you must work with the women ... you must work with the women ... the women ... you ... the women are the keys to development and democracy ... this is what I have learned.

Khan Foundation has learned this, too. That is why Khan Foundation focuses so much of its efforts on empowering women; that is why Khan Foundation created the Women Lawyers' Network fifteen years ago; that is why we all are gathered here today in this congress.

You, women lawyers of Bangladesh, are here to get to know each other, to encourage each other in your daily struggles, to build networks so you can support each other.

You, women lawyers of Bangladesh, are here to explore how best to advance development and strengthen democracy, starting at local level, the union parishad and the upazilla, where government and the people interface most closely.

You, women lawyers of Bangladesh, are here to exchange ideas on how to protect women from violence and abuse and degradation and second class citizenship.

You, women lawyers of Bangladesh, are here to develop strategies to use the law to protect the rights of the most vulnerable, the women, the poor, the youth.

You, women lawyers of Bangladesh, are great heroes ... you sacrifice in so many ways as you endeavor against the odds to bolster development and democracy. You command my deepest respect and admiration.

America is your partner in this struggle.

America seeks to support the National Legal Aid Services Organization to bring legal professionals together to support the causes of justice, development, democracy.

America seeks to train lawyers ... both men and women ... on how best to meet the needs of women clients.

America engages women lawyers in advocacy and awareness raising programs on legal reform, promoting respect for human rights, and protecting victims of domestic violence.

America is working with women prosecutors so they can be more effective in protecting the rights of all Bangladeshi citizens, including women.

In America and in Bangladesh ... to this very day ... we the people, especially the disadvantaged, the disabled, the poor, the youth, the women ... continue to cry out “enough, we want our freedom, we want development, we want democracy.”

In America and in Bangladesh ... to this very day ... government at the national, district and local levels, civil society, media, women lawyers, all of us are working together, all of us are doing our best to ensure that our children inherit from us a nation even more fair, more just, more prosperous, more democratic.

I am proud that America is your strong partner in advancing development and democracy, and I commit myself as I stand here before you at this very moment to do everything I can to support you, the women lawyers of Bangladesh, as you endeavor to advance the nation’s development and perfect the nation’s democracy.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*